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ABSTRACT

This two-part learning module provides information and several exercises to help classroom instructors understand and improve their personal communication styles. The module first identifies two broad types of communicators: those who think before they talk and those who think while they talk. It then provides a series of exercises to help the instructor assess his/her own verbal tendencies. The module next distinguishes six more specific communicator categories and helps the reader recognize in him/herself characteristics of: (1) the "Organizer," who provides structured, orderly presentations; (2) the "Scholar," who presents material rigorously and thoroughly; (3) the "Dreamer," who communicates through the abstract language of ideas; (4) the "Socializer," who communicates in an informal, non-threatening way; (5) the "Performer," who evinces a dramatic flair; and (6) the "Salesperson," who tries to convince others of the value of an action or idea. The final exercises in Part I ask the reader to develop oral presentations to brief a work supervisor or impress a job interviewer, both of whom have different communication preferences. Part II of the module applies the information covered in Part I to the classroom situation. The six communication styles are evaluated in terms of teaching effectiveness, and suggestions and exercises are provided so that instructors of each type may improve their classroom communication effectiveness. (JP)

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COMMUNICATION STYLES IN THE CLASSROOM

by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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I want to acknowledge the value of Dr. J. W. Thomas's work to my own creative process. Concepts contained in his Bi-Polar Psychology provided a focus for many of my thoughts about communication styles. I recommend his book, Bi-Polar: A Positive Way of Understanding People as a useful tool for anyone seeking to build human skills in any context.

INTRODUCTION

We are under a communication bombardment! Messages in various sensible and nonsensical patterns explode about us constantly with a kind of dread predictability. Even when we find shelter, the noise of seige can still be heard. Radios and televisions fire messages that sometimes have no meaning. Filmmakers, writers, entertainers, advertisers, public relations people -- a whole army of communicators sets its sights on the public's attention and adds its verbal fire to the general confusion.

All of us are victims of the verbal confusion and, in a way, all of us contribute to it. What we need from time to time is the welcome sound of the "all clear" siren and blessed silence. Then in the quiet, our besieged group needs to plan strategies to improve communication styles.

When we are faced with this task, several crucial problems arise: (1) it is hard to assess strengths and weaknesses of communication styles; (2) it is hard to find role models -- people who use effective communication styles; (3) it is hard to improve and to learn more effective communication styles; and (4) when one does communicate well, it is hard to maintain that style rather than to imitate tendencies more widely disseminated.

This module is designed to offer help in improving communicaton styles. The incentive for reading this module is that an effective communicator has great power leverage. For teachers whose lifeblood in the classroom is the communication process, the knowledge that an effective communication style is a weapon against student apathy, confusion, or ignorance is powerful motivation. The awareness that so-called "high risk" students desperately need good examples to bolster their poor communication styles is a further inducement.

RATIONALE

Whether lecturing, leading discussion, questioning, tutoring, or conversing informally with students, teachers not only continually exhibit their communication skills, but also become role models whose communication styles may eventually be incorporated into their students' communication patterns. This module will help you become aware of communication groups and types, become aware of your own communication style, identify both the strengths and the potential weaknesses of that style, and make improvements when necessary.

PRETEST

1. Consider the following brief descriptions of communication styles of teachers in the classroom.

The Organizer provides a structured, orderly presentation.

The scholar presents material rigorously and thoroughly

The Dreamer communicates through the abstract language of ideas.

The Socializer shares content in informal, unthreatening ways.

The Performer focuses on the dramatic interest content creates.

The Salesperson persuades of the value of an action or an idea.

Now answer both of the following:

a. My basic style is that of a/an _____.
(Choose one of the six terms.)

b. If I were to combine two styles, I would combine those of _____ and _____.

2. Match each of these styles to its basic failing. You can check the answers at the end of this module.

_____ The Organizer	a. This style fosters the belief that the acquisition of knowledge is not a discriminative process.
_____ The Scholar	b. This style's presentation overlooks basic facts that offer security to the student mind.
_____ The Dreamer	c. This style can influence students to become passive receivers who do not take learning initiative in class.
_____ The Socializer	d. This style can influence students to give up, believing that they can

never manage the content successfully.

_____ The Performer

e. This style intimidates independent thought.

_____ The Salesperson

f. This style's presentation level cannot be maintained.

3. My basic failing is _____.

(Choose one of the six listed above.)

PART A:

Learning The Concepts

KEY CONCEPTS

communication styles	scholar
dreamer	strengths
organizer	temptation
performer	tendency
salesperson	weaknesses

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successfully completing this module, you will be able to:

1. Discuss correlations between thinking and speaking patterns.
2. List the dominant characteristics of six communication styles.
3. Distinguish observable elements of your style of communication in the classroom.
4. Identify influences (role models, experiences) that have affected that style.
5. Assess major strengths and weaknesses of your style.
6. Construct a strategy for improving your communication style.

TWO GROUPS OF COMMUNICATORS

Imagine that there are two broad categories into which all verbal communicators are grouped. Group A is comprised of those who think before they talk; Group B, of those who think while they talk. Obviously such broad generalizations need to be qualified, but for the purposes of

this module the tendencies of one's personal style of communication can be highlighted by dividing all speakers into these two broad categories.

EXERCISE 1

Assess your verbal tendencies by placing a check beside Person A or Person B for each of the following ten delineations. Be as honest as possible in your self-analysis. When you answer, try to visualize yourself in settings where verbal responses are expected. Next, ask a friend who is familiar with your communication style to evaluate you in the same manner.

	Your Own Assessment	Your Friend's Assessment
1. A thinks before she talks and incorporates frequent silence or pause into her speech.	_____	_____
B thinks while she talks and tends to reply quickly, with few pauses in conversation.	_____	_____
2. A revises statements infrequently, having deliberated carefully before speaking.	_____	_____
B revises often since there is little preliminary deliberation.	_____	_____
3. A is a careful listener because he gives himself time to think before replying.	_____	_____
B is a preoccupied listener because she formulates her reply while listening.	_____	_____
4. A, if asked a question he doesn't know, will tend to stall for time.	_____	_____

	Your Own Assessment	Your Friend's Assessment
B, if asked a question he doesn't know, will bluff a response.	_____	_____
5. A tends to be protective of the ideas she expresses because she has given time to their formulation.	_____	_____
B is not particularly protective of the ideas he expresses because he has not invested much lead time in their formulation.	_____	_____
6. A uses a tempo of speaking that generally is moderate to slow.	_____	_____
B uses a tempo of speaking that generally is moderate to fast.	_____	_____
7. A often searches for a particular word or phrase to communicate her thought as accurately as possible.	_____	_____
B is not particularly exacting about her use of language and often relies on catch phrases and familiar language.	_____	_____
8. A interrupts infrequently because he is not preparing a response while listening.	_____	_____
B interrupts frequently because she is constantly preparing a response.	_____	_____

	Your Own Assessment	Your Friend's Assessment
9. A organizes his words with great ease.	_____	_____
B improvises his words with great ease.	_____	_____
10. A appreciates written communication as a prelude to verbal encounter.	_____	_____
B prefers verbal to written communication, whatever the circumstance.	_____	_____

EXERCISE 2

Select two of the items you identified as personal communication characteristics in Exercise 1 -- one that seems likely to promote effective communication and one that seems disruptive. Keep a diary for three days, making note of the times when you exhibit these two characteristics. Then answer the following questions.

a. Is there a pattern in the times when you exhibit the two characteristics?

_____

_____

b. Can you pinpoint why? _____

_____

c. Can you begin to predict when you will rely on each technique?

EXERCISE 3

Focus on someone you know whose verbal tendencies seem to be significantly different from yours. (You may want to refer to the tendencies listed in Exercise 1.) Identify one personal communication characteristic that seems likely to promote effective communication and one that seems disruptive. Using your diary again, make note of the times when this person exhibits these two characteristics. Then answer the following questions.

a. Is there a pattern in the times when the person exhibits the two characteristics?

b. Can you pinpoint why?

c. Can you begin to predict when the person will rely on each technique?

EXERCISE 4

The following two columns list some "Tendencies" and "Temptations" that can be part of a communicator's style. Tendency here is defined simply as an inclination to perform in a certain way. It is not considered a negative element of communication. A temptation, however, is a tendency that is carried to a dangerous extreme. A temptation can seriously distort the communication process.

Study the column of tendencies and circle the numbers of those that resemble inclinations of your own. Then study the column of temptations. How often do the tendencies you circled become temptations? Underline your major temptations. Then rank the underlined temptations from "most" to "least" dangerous for you as a communicator.

TENDENCIES	TEMPTATIONS	RANK
1. Sits quietly and listens	1. Listens too much without speaking up	____
2. Talks easily and freely	2. Talks too much and does not listen enough	____
3. Respects others	3. Allows others to take advantage	____
4. Expresses thoughts and feelings	4. Is overly aggressive in expressing thoughts and feelings	____
5. Gives careful consideration to a reponse	5. Responds after the fact -- when decisions have already been made	____
6. Willingly offers opinions	6. Controls the discussion	____

TENDENCIES	TEMPTATIONS	RANK
7. Provides thoughtful response	7. Is hurt and becomes withdrawn when ideas are not immediately accepted	____
8. Instills confidence in listeners	8. Manufactures confidence when it is not justified	____
9. Responds with care	9. Begs the question	____
10. Is open to suggestions	10. Espouses ideas that have not been thought through	____
11. Is accurate	11. Is tedious	____
12. Is capable of inciting a group to action	12. Is unfairly manipulative	____
13. Is cautious	13. Is slow	____
14. Is quick-witted	14. Is overwhelming	____
15. Is a self-aware communicator	15. Is a self-conscious communicator	____
16. Is informal, often colloquial, when speaking	16. Is trite when speaking	____
17. Is organized	17. Is regimented	____
18. Is spontaneous	18. Is rude	____
19. Is poised	19. Is snobbish	____
20. Is emotive	20. Relies on emotion rather than on content	____

Noticing your own tendencies can help you become more conscious of your own style of communication and can give you the opportunity to change tendencies that might affect others negatively. It is important to remember that tendency refers to a general inclination, not an occasional incident. All of us pause or interrupt in conversation from time to time. You must assess when an occasional verbal behavior becomes a tendency, or inclination.

It is important also to stress that neither the approach of thinking before you talk nor the approach of thinking while you talk is preferable. A case can be made for the value of both communication approaches. Consider the approaches of the two frequently observed public posts of diplomat and press reporter. A diplomat must think carefully before speaking, since policy itself rests on the weight of his or her words. Henry Kissinger's deliberate, careful, articulate manner is an example of the approach of a public figure who thinks before speaking and is successful because he does. A reporter, on the other hand, must be verbally aggressive and must think on his feet. The reporter needs improvisational skills; frequently he or she must question during rather than after the fact. Mike Wallace has built his reputation as a tough, discerning media journalist who uses the techniques of one who thinks while he talks.

It is not advisable to try to change your basic approach to communication; it may not even be possible to do so. What is possible is honing the strengths of your style to a sharp edge while blunting the obvious weaknesses.

SIX COMMUNICATION TYPES

To help you further analyze communication styles, six communication types that are more specific may be identified. To make it easier to

identify these types, each will be described as a personality; however, it is important to remember that styles of communication, not particular people, are being described. You may discover that one of the six captures more of your verbal habits than the others, but since you are unique, none of the six will be synonymous with your communication style. You will see that your teaching approach will most often blend several of these styles. The six types are the Organizer, the Scholar, the Dreamer, the Socializer, the Performer, and the Salesperson.

EXERCISE 5

Read each of the following descriptions of communication types. Many of these same characteristics are also capsulized at the bottom of the page. Note that all items listed are positive, valuable communication traits. When you have read each description and the accompanying list of adjectives, check the adjectives that clearly reflect your own style of communication.

THE ORGANIZER

The Organizer is just what her name implies. She is a structured, accurate communicator whose comments are generally specific and helpful. She provides information clearly and willingly. Her need to establish priorities among her thoughts is apparent, especially since she often uses sequenced expressions such as "first," "second," and "third." As might be imagined, she doesn't ramble; she will stop talking instead. She asks questions designed to clarify issues and to bring participants back to central issues. The tempo of her speech might best be described as deliberate. Generally, the more important her content, the more incremental her presentation. She takes care to distinguish between major and minor issues. She often accompanies her words with a slight frown of concentration and with firm-wristed gestures designed to be instructive. She sometimes gets bogged down in process analysis, in taking her listener through <u>all</u> the steps. She tends to avoid personal content or emotional delivery. Basically she believes that good communication brings clarity.

_____ structured	_____ clear	_____ detached
_____ specific	_____ controlled	_____ firm
_____ utilitarian	_____ organized	_____ disciplined
_____ accurate	_____ deliberate	_____ process oriented
_____ informative	_____ incremental	_____ thorough
_____ sequential	_____ focused	_____ even-paced
_____ well-ordered	_____ instructive	_____ developmental

THE SCHOLAR

He has a love of knowledge and therefore a love of language. He carries large banks of this knowledge in his head and can discuss what he knows with seeming ease. He spends a great deal of verbal energy providing context for ideas and giving the listener a clearer perspective on the complex forces that affect our ideas. His sensitivity to language and affectivion for detail are apparent in his speech. He is articulate. Because he has a desire to be exact and is aware of the nuances of language, he has a large vocabulary. He has a tendency to search for the "perfect" term in conversation and to include synonyms that will further amplify meaning. He tends to pronounce words carefully, to pause in speech, and to present his thoughts in a reserved, soft-spoken manner. His gestures might be described as refired -- restricted in space and undogmatic. He listens attentively and expects careful listening in return. Since he has invested time and energy in the expression of his thought, he is protective of his communication. His zest for accuracy, for gathering all the details surrounding a complex issue, can make him tedious. His impatience with shallow thinking explains his aversion to sweeping generalizations.

_____ precise	_____ attentive	_____ appreciative of detail
_____ learned	_____ perfectionist	_____ undogmatic
_____ contextual	_____ reserved	_____ scholarly
_____ complex	_____ soft-spoken	_____ adept at amplifying meaning
_____ articulate	_____ accurate	_____ careful in annunciation
_____ exact	_____ contemplative	_____ knowledgeable
_____ perceptive	_____ retentive	_____ reticent

THE DREAMER

She is imaginative, original, idealistic, and theoretical in bent, and her use of language reflects these tendencies. She enjoys discussing possibilities, often initiating brainstorming sessions when conversing. Her language is speculative, with conditional clauses often beginning with "What if" or "How about." Her habit is to provide little closure to discussion in order to keep idea options open as long as possible. She does not willingly or easily summarize. She has a gift for analogy, for developing comparisons that creatively enliven a thought. Because language to her sometimes seems to be a restraint, she is playful in her usage, producing unusual word combinations, coining words that may surprise, interest, or bewilder listeners. Her gestures are expansive, as though she is pulling her audience into her world. She is a creative listener, but she has the potential to lose her own listeners by leaping from idea to idea and avoiding logical process or by reworking a particular thought again and again, becoming increasingly speculative each time.

_____ imaginative	_____ hypothetical	_____ rambling
_____ original	_____ inferring	_____ open-ended
_____ theoretical	_____ enlivening	_____ free-thinking
_____ idealistic	_____ playful	_____ inventive
_____ brainstorming	_____ expansive	_____ surprising
_____ thoughtful	_____ creative	_____ attentive
_____ speculative	_____ dreamful	_____ digressive

THE SOCIALIZER

He is a gregarious extravert, responsive to people and to the needs they express. Because he has a natural feel for basic human concerns, he is able to elicit responses and to question in unthreatening ways that encourage listeners to share feelings. He is good at small talk, at enumerating the common experiences of the day. He is enthusiastic in speaking: talkative, complimentary, often smiling and nodding to encourage response. His language is generally informal, practical, and cluttered with reinforcing adjectives. He makes good introductions, willingly volunteers information about himself in conversation, and tends to touch people easily, often as an extension of animated gestures. He is diplomatic and has mastered the art of verbal compromise. He will avoid harsh words at almost any expense. He tends to want immediate response to his words. His sense of people-related concerns makes it difficult for him to maintain interest in purely theoretical discussions. He is not comfortable with formality in communication and does not enjoy speaking in front of large groups.

_____ extraverted	_____ unthreatening	_____ informal
_____ gregarious	_____ encouraging	_____ reinforcing
_____ responsive	_____ personal	_____ colloquial
_____ need-oriented	_____ practical	_____ complimentary
_____ compassionate	_____ conversational	_____ sociable
_____ solicitous	_____ warm	_____ diplomatic
_____ enthusiastic	_____ touch-oriented	_____ compromising

THE PERFORMER

She is emotive, dramatic, and intuitive. She has a natural verbal facility, which in all likelihood she enjoys but has not analyzed. She has a knack for finding and pleasing audiences. Chances are that she has developed and perfected, almost unconsciously, an individualized communication style that enables her to tell a story with great effectiveness. Her language is descriptive and sensory. She uses concrete, factual detail effectively and sprinkles in healthy amounts of imagery. She is comfortable speaking in front of large groups and is a good audience for other performers. Her gestures punctuate her words in dramatic fashion, but are not so expansive as to distract. She has a good sense of timing and paces her words in such a way that they punctuate her style, which may be humorous, flamboyant, inventive, ironic. As a result, she has the capability of holding an audience's interest longer than usual, has come to expect such attention, and is particularly sensitive to inattentiveness. In informal settings, she may lose her focus as an effective communicator if the group she is dealing with does not become her audience. Then she may seem vague, preoccupied, disjointed, even withdrawn.

_____ emotive	_____ people-oriented	_____ attentive
_____ dramatic	_____ responsive	_____ uses imagery
_____ intuitive	_____ witty	_____ factual
_____ articulate	_____ captivating	_____ inventive
_____ entertaining	_____ instinctive	_____ sensitive
_____ creative	_____ gregarious	_____ flamboyant
_____ individualized	_____ descriptive	_____ theatrical

THE SALESPERSON

He is a promoter who has the personal power and forcefulness to initiate change. His verbal patterns reflect these strengths. He is persuasive and can develop a verbal momentum that convinces people almost against their will. His enthusiasm then may generate enough energy to move his audience to action. He makes recommendations willingly and is adept at flattery. If you were to punctuate his speech, there would be an abundance of exclamation points. His verbal energy level is consistently high. When he is tired, it is difficult to tell from his tone of voice or his conversation. He is confrontational in his use of language and falls easily into debating and questioning tactics. He rarely gives equivocal response and will answer with seeming certainty even when he is unsure. He will not tolerate silence for long and tends to fill in lulls in conversation with ease. His delivery is fast-paced, direct, and free of wasted motion. He avoids detail and grows impatient with a more leisurely conversational pace. His gestures are also direct and designed to elicit response. His negative tendency is to overwhelm people, to say too much too forcefully, and to be so involved in his presentation that he doesn't notice that his audience is wilting.

_____ instigative	_____ admiring	_____ unequivocal
_____ forceful	_____ energetic	_____ confident
_____ convincing	_____ fluent	_____ improvisatorial
_____ persuasive	_____ intense	_____ direct
_____ enthusiastic	_____ confrontational	_____ demanding
_____ offensive (in tactic)	_____ combative	_____ generalizing
_____ recommendatory	_____ questioning	_____ overwhelming

Now tally the number of adjectives you checked in each description and record the totals below. Since the number of adjectives is the same for each description, perhaps you will be able to spot trends or tendencies in your own communication style.

The Organizer _____

The Scholar _____

The Dreamer _____

The Socializer _____

The Performer _____

The Salesperson _____

EXERCISE 6

Assume you are to brief a work supervisor about a project. Assume further that this person will best respond to a presentation that corresponds with his or her own personal communication style. Select one of the six communication types described in this module as your supervisor's predominant communication style. On your own paper, prepare an outline for your briefing that is appropriate to your job setting. To help you get started, strategy guidelines are listed below.

TO BRIEF THE ORGANIZER

You will need to incorporate a great deal of structure into your presentation. This structure should give a clear indication of priorities as well as of the relationships of parts to the whole.

TO BRIEF THE SCHOLAR

You will need to provide a context for information, to avoid simplistic answers, and to offer detail. This presentation should avoid sweeping generalizations and should show how points interrelate.

TO BRIEF THE DREAMER

You will need to be theoretical and to tie those constructs to the possibilities they suggest. It is important that your presentation be innovative and original.

TO BRIEF THE SOCIALIZER

You will need to address practical issues that affect human relationships. This presentation needs to assure that people as well as process have been considered.

TO BRIEF THE PERFORMER

You will need to present material in a lively, creative manner. The quality of the presentation is perhaps the key here.

TO BRIEF THE SALESPERSON

You will need to avoid jargon and lengthy detail. Use the future tense often. Here the presenter needs to be self-assured and positive and must stress the potential of the project.

EXERCISE 7

You can use a similar sort of planning for a job interview if you can first determine the basic communication style of the interviewer. In several sentences write on your own paper a strategy for favorable impressing a prospective employer whose communication style is one of the six communication types that is very different from your own.

When you have completed Exercises 6 and 7, reread the descriptions of the communication style towards which you directed your outline or strategy. Then ask yourself these questions to check your work:

1. Have I truly based my presentation on my supervisor's or interviewer's communication style? Test yourself by deciding how you would rearrange or redesign the outline for several different audiences.
2. Have I conscientiously excluded elements that would annoy this particular communication type? For example, lack of structure would frustrate an Organizer very quickly; too much simplifica-

tion would disturb a Scholar.

3. Have I included elements that respond to the natural strengths of this communicator? This need not be a heavy-handed or manipulative attempt. You can complement your supervisor or prospective employer by considering his or her predispositions and how to respond to them. It may take a minimum of additional preparation to forecast for the Dreamer or to offer personal applications for the Socializer, but the results are well worth the effort.
4. Have I considered how my own communication style complements the style of this communicator? For example, Dreamers and Performers often have a natural affinity for one another's styles because of their playful attitude towards language.
5. Similarly, have I considered how my own style opposes that of this communicator? For example, Scholars and Salespersons assimilate in different ways the information they communicate. Scholars constantly gather additional information; salespersons simplify or narrow their focus to a few key issues.

Find a colleague who has the same style that your supervisor or interviewer does. Explain your strategy to him or her and ask for specific feedback.

EXERCISE 8

Match each communication type to the statements that seem most typical. You can check the answers at the end of the module.

_____ The Organizer a. "A great many factors need to be considered to put that episode in proper

perspective."

_____ The Scholar

b. "There can be no doubt of its value. I am positive this is the step you should take!"

_____ The Dreamer

c. "I want to hear about you. How does all this affect you?"

_____ The Socializer

d. "There are so many more possibilities. Let's not stop brainstorming now."

_____ The Performer

e. "Let's gather all the information first. Then we can assign logical divisions."

_____ The Salesperson

f. "Let me tell you about an extraordinary experience. It began innocently enough."

EXERCISE 9

Consider the following. An attempt has been made to match United States presidents with their predominant communication types.

Dwight D. Eisenhower	The Organizer
Woodrow Wilson	The Scholar
John F. Kennedy	The Dreamer
Jimmy Carter	The Socializer
Theodore Roosevelt	The Performer
Franklin D. Roosevelt	The Salesperson

Now, you invent such a "matching of types" list on your own paper. Think of six well-known persons, real or fictional, living or dead, and match them with the six communication types. Hamlet, for instance, could be classified as a Dreamer, Mark Twain as a Performer. Making such a list can be fun!

PART B:

APPLYING THE CONCEPTS

STYLE EFFECTIVENESS IN THE CLASSROOM

By now you have familiarized yourself with the six communication types presented in Part A and have identified several of your own verbal traits. You also have probably begun to assess the effectiveness of these types and traits in the classroom. Actually, each of the six communication types may be used quite effectively in a classroom setting, but all have danger points as well. Part B of this module is designed to apply the communication styles to the classroom. It describes each type as a teacher and then provides exercises that encourage you to become creatively self-conscious about your communication style in the classroom and that give you some practical guidelines for increasing your effectiveness. In each description strengths are intentionally stressed, but each concludes with the most likely way that tendencies of that particular style can become weaknesses.

Perhaps by this point you have identified strongly with one communication style. Perhaps you see yourself as a blend of several styles. Perhaps you have analyzed your own communication tendencies deeply enough to understand that you use one style in one teaching setting and another style in a different set of circumstances. You may conform most often to one style in the classroom and may adopt several other styles as antidotes to your dangerous tendencies as a communicator. In processing the following material, the more concrete your application, the more valuable the styles will become as tools of assessment.

EXERCISE 10

Make a list of five teachers who taught you who were effective communicators. (Consider those who had distinctive methods of delivery of involving students, of disseminating information.) Also make a list of five teachers who taught you who were ineffective communicators.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS	INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Now review the two lists. Place a star by the names of those who have had the most influence on your own style in the classroom, either because you consciously modeled yourself after a teacher whose style you admired, or because you actively avoided a style you disliked.

_____

EXERCISE 11

As you read each of the descriptions in this section, select a teacher from one of the two lists you developed in Exercise 10 whose style seems to conform in important ways to communication traits identified in the description. On a separate sheet of paper, itemize the strengths and/or weaknesses of this particular teacher. Be specific.

DESCRIPTIONS OF TEACHING STYLES

THE ORGANIZER AS TEACHER

The Organizer inspires confidence in the classroom. Students have a sense of being in an orderly, rational world. In his lectures, he presents material in such a way that students know where they have been, where they are going, and -- most important -- where they are. It is not uncommon for each day's comments to be part of a master plan, perhaps structured as an outline. He is intent on establishing how each incremental part relates to the whole and frequently uses transitional devices that indicate stages of development. He may concentrate on chronology, on establishing priorities, or on logical sequence. He is adept at verbal review, at taking one step backward before taking several forward. He tends to rely on the technical language of his profession because it communicates exactly what he means. It is a joy to take notes in his class. He responds easily and succinctly to questions directly related to the material. He will not digress. His communication style is consistent -- surprises are rare in the classroom. Voice, manner, energy level, and preparation are predictable and reflect competence. The danger in his approach is in the degree of control. His style may bore or intimidate some students; the most likely possibility is that a high degree of control will make his students passive receivers who do not take learning initiative in class.

THE SCHOLAR AS TEACHER

Her affinity for her subject matter is immediately obvious. Her verbal style reflects a careful attempt to treat the material fairly and thoroughly. Her knowledge base is sizable and is presented as accurately

as possible. Her vocabulary also is sizable to accommodate such scope. She lectures because she knows exactly what needs to be covered and how. She is not comforable with lists or broad outlines, because they are simplistic tools that cannot reflect the interdependence of the content. Whether asking or responding to questions, she tends to provide levels of response -- a factual response is rarely adequate, but merely the groundwork for a consideration of concepts and applications. She organizes her material in interrelated clusters rather than in linear design. Because ideas are rarely equal and her transition devices are often equivocal ("on the one hand," "in contrast," "at the same time"), she relies heavily on complex sentence structures and tends to weave her thoughts into intricate designs. She provides a wealth of detail to support these designs and is careful to bring her material to a well-conceived, multidimensional conclusion. Perhaps the most common negative response to her communication in the classroom is student frustration because of obvious content disparity; she knows, and feels it necessary to share, so much while her pupils know so little. There is always the danger that students will give up, believing that they can never manage the content successfully.

THE DREAMER AS TEACHER

There is nothing sacrosanct about the material he presents or his method of presentation in the classroom. He deals with facts and especially with ideas, but he treats them almost playfully. He tries to be a catalyst rather than a guardian of knowledge. Perhaps with a faraway look in his eye, he will explore possibilities, inviting informal discussion, encouraging his students to combine information in new and creative ways. He does not lecture. but rather brainstorms, frequently pulling in student ideas, but also feeling free to "think aloud" in reverie fashion for extended

periods. His manner is relaxed -- he may have a tendency to lean or to lounge -- until a new appealing way of viewing the material strikes him and he instantly becomes animated. He may being with a concrete example, but generally moves quickly to the abstract language of ideas. He has a tendency to never quite finish an idea -- as one never quite finishes a dream. He asks a great many questions, most of which have no clear-cut answers. He might be accused from time to time of digressing, of rambling, or of making a quantum leap in thought before his students are prepared to follow. His presentation invariably creates interest, but may overlook basic facts that offer security to the student's mind. It is not uncommon for a student to be frustrated and unsure of what he or she has just "learned" in his class.

THE SOCIALIZER AS TEACHER

Her class is warm and comfortable, with little or no threat attached to the communication patterns used in sharing content. She is chatty and open, constantly involving her students. She never lectures, but rather discusses and coaxes responses from her students. Her techniques seem to turn the classroom into a living room, and students respond conversationally not only to her but also to each other. She has a natural antipathy to straight rows of chairs, so she groups them so that students never face the backs of one another's heads. Because of the unthreatening dynamics she creates, it is easy for her to initiate small-group work. She feels comfortable sitting with h students, moving about the classroom, inviting interruptions, laughing, providing supportive verbal feedback to student responses. She makes personal references, speaks easily of feelings, and tends to be practical rather than theoretical. She usually works from the

specific to the general. In fact, content must have clear, specific application to her sutdents' needs in order to be given priority. To foster practical applications, she provides a wealth of down-to-earth "for examples." She is inclined to use idioms, and she knows and uses many of the terms in her students' vernacular. The danger of her approach as a communicator is that she may become so relaxed and accepting of all responses that she may unconsciously foster the belief that the acquisition of knowledge or skills is not a discriminative process.

THE PERFORMER AS TEACHER

He would seem to be -- and, at his best, is -- a natural teacher, holding classes in the palm of his hand, creating a moment of "Aha!" in a student who might never have seen the truth if his or her attention had not been commanded. He has a flair, a style, a voice that can fill the room with sound or fall to a whisper. He uses gestures to act out events, dares to try things that would make others seem foolish, and uses long pauses that dare you to breathe and break the spell. He generally is asked very few questions because students don't want to break in , but he does read student interest accurately, as any good performer reads his or her audience. He plays well to them, defying their boredom or fatigue or "sophistication." He may most often instruct by telling a story; content can be rendered in story form if his imagination is facile enough. He manipulates the rhythm and the texture of his language and he relies heavily on sensory images and concrete details. There are often multiple dimensions to his presentation; for example, he may focus on both the science and the drama of a theory he is presenting. His most serious problem in the classroom is that his performance level cannot be maintained; the flat days can be

very flat indeed. Teaching contains too much of the routine, the transitional, and the personal always to be rendered best dramatically.

THE SALESPERSON AS TEACHER

Her style is simple, straightforward, energetic, and persuasive. Her teaching style incorporates brisk physical movement, a fast-paced verbal tempo, and the expectation of quick verbal response from her students. It is hard to be a bump on a log in her class. She establishes eye contact with her students and demands attentiveness. She enjoys playing devil's advocate, debating with a willing student or convincing an unwilling one of the merit of an idea and asking direct, "to-the-heart-of-the-matter" questions. Because she likes simplicity of communication, she avoids jargon, relies on simple thought constructions, uses action verbs, and avoids any idiosyncracies of presentation that might suggest elitism. She has the ability to sift through large quantities of specific information and find generalizable applications. She deals primarily with major concepts and concentrates on "selling" these constructs -- on making them seem reliable. Generally, such constructs must be assessed by the students on their own. She is a self-confident director of the classroom -- reporter, questioner, and opinion-maker par excellence. A student must offer high verbal energy in response to her -- silence or equivocation is interpreted as lack of preparation. Herein lies her weakness. She has the power to be intimidating and therefore to impede learning.

PRACTICE SESSION

As has been mentioned, a tendency of any communication style can become a temptation. Following are several practical methods you might try when you sense you are developing temptations in your communication style. Suggestions are provided for each of the six categories. As you review the lists of suggestions, keep in mind that they are designed not to alter your basic approach but to help you vary your style when it loses effectiveness.

EXERCISE 12

Choose a goal for one of these six communication styles. Using the following lists of suggestions or developing techniques of your own that support the goal, develop one concrete strategy for varying this style. Be very specific. Write your strategy in the space provided at the end of this exercise. Eventually you might want to rehearse your strategy. It is not easy to change a well-developed teaching routine, even when the variation is slight.

THE ORGANIZER

Goal: Develop techniques that will break the regimented rhythm of your presentation.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Use illustrations drawn from another context -- from personal experience, from a complementary discipline, from current events.
2. Invite informal comment from students. You may begin very simply. Check roll by asking students to respond yes or no to a question that

is related to your content, is subjective, is open to interpretation, and invites personal interpretation.

3. Vary the rhythm, volume, or movement of your presentation in some way.
4. Read aloud or recite a brief excerpt of material that is relevant, lively--perhaps even dramatic.
5. Deliberately digress! (If you've planned this, you'll not go too far astray and you may even have method in your digressing without spoiling the effect of this technique.)

THE SCHOLAR

Goal: Concentrate on ways of making material personally accessible to students.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Include generalization from time to time to give a visible framework to the content's complexity.
2. Use an analogy to connect a sophisticated concept to one more common to student understanding.
3. Increase informal discussion.
4. Work on pace. Allot a specific amount of time to a difficult section of material and be prepared to move on at the designated point, at least for the day.
5. Cultivate a colloquialism or two! (At least become familiar with current vernacular so that you can occasionally offer synonyms that are in wide circulation.)

THE DREAMER

Goal: Provide a framework to make ideas more practical and easier to remember.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Ask more content-related questions.
2. Develop a "for example" verbal habit. Try to relate each example to the student's world.
3. Practice using transitional devices that will bring the discussion back to home base. Decide what home base is for each class period. Give special attention to "in conclusion."
4. Use handouts as a traveler would use a road map -- to remind you of the route.
5. Cultivate clarity!

THE SOCIALIZER

Goal: Develop your own and your students' evaluative skills.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Find approaches that will allow you to express disagreement comfortably.
2. Learn to use silence.
3. Ask more clarifying questions.
4. Set up a discussion by making a brief, formal presentation of the content to be considered.
5. Frown occasionally! (Once a semester you might even want to get angry.)

THE PERFORMER

Goal: Shift the focus away from you from time to time.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Consciously develop various questioning techniques.
2. Use the blackboard, handouts, and printed materials -- resources other than your own communication skills.

3. Share the "stage." Use media, student reports, dialogues, panel discussions.
4. Make assignments verbally. Spend time discussing your expectations.
5. Grope for a word now and then! (Think of the mileage Jimmy Stewart has gotten from this technique through the years.)

THE SALESPERSON

Goal: Develop techniques that occasionally will slow your tempo and relax your intensity.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Offer more detail.
2. Become more deliberate in manner.
3. Alter your movement pattern, remain stationary at times. Slow your verbal delivery at a point when you would typically accelerate.
4. Ask open-ended questions for which you have in mind no specific response.
5. Incorporate imagery into your presentations. Appeal to the senses as well as to the mind and will.
6. Admit you are wrong occasionally! (This can be a disarming technique for an aggressive communicator.)

Your strategy for varying your communication style:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

EXERCISE 13

Match the communication style to the teaching setting most likely to call the best strengths of that style into play.

_____	The Organizer	a.	a huge class
_____	The Scholar	b.	a briefing
_____	The Dreamer	c.	a graduate seminar
_____	The Socializer	d.	a pregame meeting in the locker room
_____	The Performer	e.	an informal discussion group
_____	The Salesperson	f.	a futures conference

_____

EXERCISE 14

Perhaps you have noticed that one style might effectively be paired with another. Assume that one style is primary and that a second occasionally could be drawn on to help counter temptations inherent in the first. The first column below is designated "primary style." For each primary style, add one of the other six to create a pair. Explain briefly why you have chosen the second style. To complete six pairs, you may use a style more than once.

PRIMARY STYLE	COMPLEMENTARY STYLE
The Organizer	_____
The Scholar	_____
The Dreamer	_____
The Socializer	_____
The Performer	_____
The Salesperson	_____

_____

EXERCISE 15

Create a triad. Select three of the six communication styles, one to be your primary style, the other two you complementary styles. This triad should indicate your verbal patterns as a classroom communicator. Briefly explain your group strategy. Then describe a classroom situation in which you have incorporated or will incorporate these three styles into your teaching technique.

Primary Style: _____

Complementary Styles: _____

Explanation: _____

_____

_____

Classroom Situation: _____

_____

_____

_____

EXERCISE 16

It is hoped that this module has helped you assess your own communication style in the classroom. As a last exercise, analyze your style. You can use the classification systems in the module as a guide, but feel free to introduce new elements, to blend patterns, or even to contradict assumptions of the module.

When you have finished your analysis, indicate ways in which you counter temptations in your style or will counter such temptations in the future.

As an example, here is my own self-analysis:

> I am primarily a communicator who thinks before she speaks and who exhibits most often the characteristics of the Dreamer in a teaching situation. Initially I may present content in a straightforward manner, but soon I am brainstorming, usually with my students' help, about the implications of such content. I frequently begin sentences with "What if?" or "Suppose" or "Imagine." Since I teach literature, I love to press for universal significance, sometimes at the expense of applications far less global, but much more relevant to students. I am verbally creative and am willing to use language playfully to make a point. It is easy for me to draw analogies, to idealize content (often making it grander than it is), and to appear disorganized if I am following a thought to its speculative limit.

To counter some areas of weakness in my basic style, I have learned to do these things:

> I have learned to recognize symptoms in my students that indicate I may have frustrated their interest. Each semester as I begin working with a class, I pinpoint several students who seem to

be basically pragmatic, who are not English majors, and who are open enough to register displeasure. I read their faces for expressions that say to me, "Boy, is she in the clouds!" or "Who cares!" or "She is going too far!" A sure give-away is a knowing glance between two compatriots that says, "Here she goes again!" I may draw one of these healthy skeptics out, asking if he understands or if she can see the connection.

I have taught myself to say "for example." I use illustrations often to control my tendency to wander into abstractions.

I use handouts to define, focus, and outline concepts before we move into speculative terrain.

I have tried to incorporate several tendencies of the Organizer into my communication style. These tendencies seem to help me counter some of my "wanderlust" temptations.

My goal is to become a more responsive classroom communicator when dealing with individual students. I want to be better able to motivate, reinforce, and challenge individuals. To help accomplish this goal, I am planning strategies commonly used by the Socializer. Since I have a tendency to rhapsodize when I make a point -- a style that impedes sharing -- I am trying to become more conversational and thus more approachable. My plan is to personalize content from time to time by sharing from my own experience. I have noted that students respond in kind to such openness.

POSTTEST

1. Consider the following brief descriptions of communication styles of teachers in the classroom.

The Organizer provides a structured, orderly presentation.

The Scholar presents material rigorously and thoroughly.

The Dreamer communicates through the abstract language of ideas.

The Socializer shares content in informal, unthreatening ways.

The Performer focuses on the dramatic interest content creates.

The Salesperson persuades of the value of an action or an idea.

Now answer both of the following:

a. My basic style is that of a/an _____.
(Choose one of the six terms.)

b. If I were to combine two styles, I would combine those of _____ and _____.

2. Match each of these styles to its basic failing. You can check the answers at the end of this module.

_____ The Organizer	a. This style fosters the belief that the acquisition of knowledge is not a discriminative process.
_____ The Scholar	b. This style's presentation overlooks basic facts that offer security to the student mind.
_____ The Dreamer	c. This style can influence students to

give up, believing that they can never manage the content successfully.

_____ The Performer

e. This style intimidates independent thought.

_____ The Salesperson

f. This style's presentation level cannot be maintained.

3. My basic failing is _____

(Choose one of the six listed above.)

ANSWER KEY

PRETEST/POSTTEST

2. c,d,b,a,f,e

EXERCISE 8

e,a,d,c,f,b

EXERCISE 13

b,c,f,e,a,d

EXERCISE 14

Since answers are individual, there is no "best" response. The Organizer, for example, might effectively be linked with any of the others. He or she might want to be more speculative like the Dreamer, or more informal in manner like the Socializer, etc.

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